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North Carolina A&T State University
School of Agriculture and
Environmental Sciences
Newsletter
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Locally grown, good for all ... and ***gaining momentum***



Thomas Pierce of Martin County was the 2011 N.C. A&T Small Farmer of the Year.

In keeping with the expanding movement to grow, buy and eat local foods, this year's Small Farms Week activities have been tagged with a theme that reflects the push for locally produced foods. Locally Grown, Good for All, is the mantra for 2012 Small Farms Week activities, set for March 25-31.

The annual observance is a good time to further develop the relationship between local producers and consumers, says Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, SAES associate dean and administrator of The Cooperative Extension Program, which organizes the annual event. Programs and activities produced during the weeklong celebration will focus not only on the farmers who are the honorees of the observance but also include activities for consumers who have made a commitment to locally grown foods.

"'Locally Grown, Good for All' means there's an opportunity to get in at all levels, from commercial growers to the backyard gardener who just has a couple of tomato plants and zucchini," McKinnie says. "The idea being that everyone is putting food production closer to the dinner plate. We have an opportunity to have food in our communities and within our own backyard."

Local-production educational programs featured during this year's Small Farms Week

include sessions on how to produce, prepare and price fresh poultry and beef. Tours of two area farms with strong track records in value added agriculture are also scheduled.

The demand for food that consumers know hasn't been shipped across thousands of miles of highways or oceans, and that is relatively fresh from the ground, water or animal source, is evidenced by the growth in farmers markets, the development of community-supported agriculture, farmers' cooperatives and community gardens. Cooperative Extension continues to help farmers tap into those markets at the same time it is connecting consumers with local sources of fresh food.

"Cooperative Extension is the conduit telling growers what to plant in keeping with market demand, and what to do with the food that they've harvested," McKinnie says. "Community gardening cuts across the total swath of Cooperative Extension's portfolio: agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, the youth development component of what we do, and certainly it involves community organization and development."

Local food has also developed into a commitment for buyers and sellers to literally put their money where their mouths are, with the statewide 10% Campaign, conducted by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems. Designed to promote North Carolina's farms and fisheries, and to also boost jobs and economic development, the campaign reports that more than \$12 million in locally produced food has been purchased since the campaign began in July 2010. As part of the effort, such food-supplying businesses as restaurants, bakeries, caterers and hospitals are joining families and individuals in pledging to direct at least 10 percent of their food budget on locally produced food.

The efforts have generated varying support with highs of \$4.4 million and \$1.3 million in local food purchases since July 2010 in Wake and Buncombe counties, respectively, to several counties where no local spending has been reported. The statistics don't necessarily mean that there is no local food spending in those counties, only that no businesses and individuals in those counties have joined the campaign to report what's spent.

Nor does a county's population indicate its performance. Consider that the second most populous county, Mecklenburg, reported \$140,730 in local food spending, but that amount was nearly doubled in Chatham County, only the 53rd most populous county. Chatham reported \$267,885 in local food spending, reflecting 88 participating individuals, three farms, one restaurant and 13 other businesses. Mecklenburg had 394 individual participants, five restaurants and 16 other businesses, but no participating farmers.

Farmers are key components, as well as beneficiaries, to the local foods scenario. Engaging more farmers in the campaign would both document their impact on local economies as well as potentially increase their farm income, says Dr. John O'Sullivan, who represents Cooperative Extension at A&T as the co-director of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems.

"We can document that \$12 million was spent by consumers locally and that is guaranteed going to local farmers," says O'Sullivan. "All of it is exciting and it's good to see the continued interest. It's going to go deeper and more complex as people realize the health benefits of consuming local food."

SMALL FARMS WEEK SCHEDULE

MARCH 25 – 31

Past recipients of the Small Farmer of the Year Award

2011	Thomas Pierce, <i>Martin County</i>
2010	Joe Thompson, <i>Orange County</i>
2009	John L. Council Farms, <i>Hoke County</i>
2008	Mary and Nelson James, <i>Pender County</i>
2007	Gary Morrell, <i>Alexander County</i>
2006	Ann and Harold Wright, <i>Bladen County</i>
2005	Kirby and Nathaniel Maram, <i>Watauga County</i>
2004	Stanley Hughes, <i>Orange County</i>
2003	Amy Locklear-Cummings and Ellery Locklear, <i>Robeson County</i>
2002	James A. Davis III, <i>Halifax County</i>
2001	Burnice Blanks, <i>Robeson County</i>
2000	Willie Woolard, <i>Martin County</i>
1999	James Dunn, <i>Wake County</i>
1998	Barbara and Lesker Loyied Norris, <i>Wake County</i>
1997	Barbara and Larry Pierce, <i>Halifax County</i>
1996	Jackie Garner, <i>Bladen County</i>
1995	Betsy and Alex Hitt, <i>Alamance County</i>
1994	Harold Davis, <i>Yancey County</i>
1993	Elton Smith, <i>Halifax County</i>
1992	Charles D. Sneed, <i>Franklin County</i>
1991	Linda Woody, <i>Yancey County</i>
1990	Robert Edmonds Jr., <i>Halifax County</i>
1989	Lonnie Harrison Jr., <i>Warren County</i>
1988	Kenneth Tobler, <i>Surry County</i>
1987	Roy Robertson, <i>Stokes County</i>

To register for any Small Farms Week activity, visit the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Web page, www.ag.ncat.edu. A \$20 registration fee is required for Tuesday and Wednesday's activities. Small Farmers who register in advance are exempt. The registration deadline is March 16.

MONDAY, MARCH 26

10 a.m. — Kickoff

JAMESVILLE COMMUNITY FIRE DEPARTMENT
(1035 Hayes St., Jamesville)

Dr. Rosalind Dale, The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T regional coordinator for eastern N.C., will be presiding. Official greetings will come from: **Al Cochran**, Martin County Extension Director; **Elmo "Butch" Lilley**, Chair of the Martin County Board of Commissioners; **David Bone**, Martin County Manager; and **Archie Hart**, Director of the Office of Small Farms Policy, N.C. Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

10:45 a.m. — Welcome and introductions

Dr. M. Ray McKinnie, associate dean and administrator, The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T

11 a.m. — Martin County's Farmer Fresh Market Program

Jeff Ivey, Manager

11:20 a.m. — Cultivating the Market for Locally Grown Food

Dr. John O'Sullivan, Extension farm management and marketing specialist, A&T

11:40 a.m. — 2011 Small Farmer of the Year Video

Noon — Lunch on site

Luncheon speaker: **Rod Gurganus**, Extension associate and director of the N.C. MarketReady program

N.C. MarketReady is N.C. Cooperative Extension's response to consumer demand for food safety training. The initiative also supports farmers moving into value-added agriculture. Gurganus is the director of the program for eastern North Carolina, where he is working with agribusinesses, farmers and government agencies to identify ways to add value to what's produced on a farm.

1:30 to 3 p.m. — Tour of J&J Farm

(1085 Pierce Lane, Jamesville)

J&J Farm is a family operation, with Thomas Pierce attending to innovations in production and crop selection that keep the fruits and vegetables flowing from the farm to a roadside stand on U.S. 64. Holly Pierce attends to the bookkeeping, and sons Joshua and Jackson do what they should to ensure they live up to the honor of having the family farm named for them. Their father wasn't raised on a family farm, so the origins of Thomas Pierce's success are due in part to his decision to contact Martin County Cooperative Extension for guidance at the same time that he purchased the additional acreage he needed to carve out a livelihood in small-scale agriculture.

OF EVENTS

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TUESDAY, MARCH 27

N.C. A&T CAMPUS

Tour departs from United House of Prayer parking lot across Market Street from Coltrane Hall (101 S. Dudley St., Greensboro)

12:30 to 5 p.m. — Educational Forum: Tours of two farms that market livestock directly to local customers

12:15 Tour of Cane Creek Farm

(1203 Longest Acres Road, Snow Camp, N.C.)

3:45 p.m. Tour of Pine Knot Farms

(8906 Hester Road, Hurdle Mills, N.C.)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28

SMALL FARMERS APPRECIATION DAY AT N.C. A&T

9 – 11:15 a.m. — Educational Forum: Marketing Livestock to Local Customers

STALLINGS BALLROOM

(Memorial Student Union Building, A&T campus)

9 – 10:10 a.m. — Session I

Meat cuts and pricing — Lee Menius, Wild Turkey Farms

China Grove, N.C. <http://wildturkeyfarms.blogspot.com/>

Value-added livestock products — Eliza MacLean, Cane Creek Farm,

Snow Camp, N.C. <http://www.canecreekfarm.us/>

Marketing options for fresh poultry — Casey McKissick,

Coordinator, NC Choices Sustainable Food System Initiative
<http://www.ncchoices.com/staff>

Food Safety and Other Marketing Tools — Dr. Rosalind Dale,

A&T Cooperative Extension Regional Program Coordinator

Being a "Meat Product Entrepreneur" — Jennifer Curtis, co-founder

and COO, Farmland Foods <http://www.farmhandfoods.com/>

10:10 – 10:30 a.m. — Break

(and a sampling of Farmhand Foods sausage)

10:30 – 11:15 a.m. — Panel Discussion

Beef — Amy Thomas, TX Enterprises, Wallburg, N.C.

Pork — Eliza MacLean, Cane Creek Farm, Snow Camp, N.C.

Poultry — Casey McKissick, NC Choices Sustainable Food System Initiative

Small Animal Processing — Dr. Paljinder Manhiani, Foothills Pilot Plant, Marion, N.C.

Large Animal Processing — Abdul Chaudhry, Chaudhry Halal Meats, Siler City, N.C.

Small Farms Week

it's a growing business ~ locally grown, good for all



March 25–31, 2012

11 a.m. — VIP reception (by invitation only) Premiere of *Solutions for North Carolina™* and sponsor reception

ALUMNI-FOUNDATION EVENT CENTER

(200 N. Benbow Road on the A&T campus)

Presiding: **Dr. M. Ray McKinnie**, associate dean and administrator, The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T

Noon — Small Farmers Appreciation Luncheon

ALUMNI-FOUNDATION EVENT CENTER

(200 N. Benbow Road on the A&T campus)

Speaker: **Dr. Homer L. Wilkes**, Acting Associate Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Homer Wilkes has risen to a top-level position at the NRCS on the cusp of a career that spans more than 30 years with the agency. He has served as the state conservationist in Mississippi, where he was a proponent of a special initiative for farmers with 100 acres or less. Wilkes received both his MBA and a doctorate in public policy from one of A&T's sister HBCUs, Jackson State University.

The NRCS has almost 12,000 employees and an annual budget of more than \$3 billion. The NRCS traces its origins to USDA's Soil Conservation Service, which was established in 1935, and now emphasizes incentives for voluntary participation in conservation programs and the technical assistance to support these programs. In 2005 the NRCS signed a landmark agreement with A&T that brought one of three national technology support centers and a remote sensing lab to what has become Gateway University Park, located on property that was formerly part of the University Farm.

on the *move*

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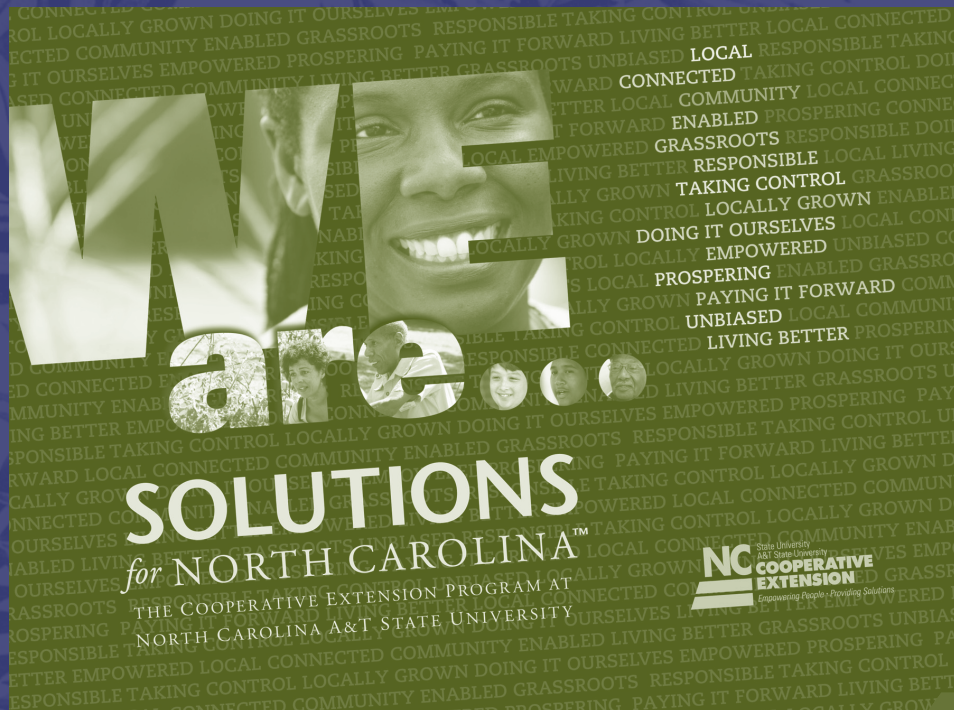
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photos — is also available
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